

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-12 ADP-00 SR-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09

H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-15 USIA-12 ARA-11 EA-11 EUR-25 NEA-10 AID-20 RSR-01

/172 W

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R 041215 Z APR 73

FM AMCONSUL KISANGANI

TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 090

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KISANGANI 00061

KINSHASA PLEASE PASS ZAMISH FOR COLONEL HARRIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: REPATRIATION OF SUDANESE REFUGEES

SUMMARY: ACCORDING DAVID ARNOLD, AMCIT DIRECTOR UNHCR OPERATION TO REPATRIATE SUDANESE REFUGEES IN NORTH EAST ZAIRE, PROGRAM IS NOW WELL UNDERWAY. IN LAST TWO WEEKS 3,000 HAVE BEEN REPATRIATED BY MEANS OF NEWLY ARRIVED TRUCKS. SINCE ANOTHER 20,000 HAD ALREADY RETURNED TO SUDAN BY FOOT, ABOUT 22,000 HAVE STILL TO BE REPATRIATED. HOWEVER REMAINING REFUGEES ARE THOSE FARTHEST FROM THE ONE BORDER CROSSING AT ABA RPT ABA. THEIR RETURN IS BEING SERIOUSLY DELAYED AS RESULT GOZ REFUSAL OPEN TWO OTHER CROSSINGS PREVIOUSLY AGREED UPON. CONTINUED DENIAL BY GOZ OF USE THESE CROSSINGS POINTS WILL, ACCORDING ARNOLD, GREATLY INCREASE COSTS AND TRIPLE DURATION REPATRIATION PROGRAM. WILL LEAD ALSO TO CONSIDERABLE HARDSHIP FOR REFUGEES, WHO WILL NOT RETURN HOME IN TIME TO PLANT CROPS DURING RAINY SEASON NOW BEGINNING. UNHCR HAS TRIED HIGH LEVEL DIPLOMATIC APPROACHES TO GOZ TO NO AVAIL. IS NOW CONSIDERING AIRLIFT. IN VIEW OUR POLITICAL
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INTEREST IN RESOLUTION REMAINING PROBLEMS RELATED TO SUDANESE SETTLEMENT, AND OUR LARGE CONTRIBUTION TO REPATRIATION SCHEME, BELIEVE WE MAY WISH CONSIDER, WITH UNHCR, WHETHER WE CAN USE INFLUENCE WITH GOZ TO SPEED UP ACTION. IT THIS FAILS, WE MIGHT WISH LOOK INTO FEASIBILITY OF PARTICIPATION BY ZAMISH AIRCRAFT IN LIFT FOR REFUGEES. END SUMMARY.

1. IN PROTOCOL ATTACHED TO ORIGINAL SUDAN- ZAIRE AGREEMENT ON REFUGEE REPATRIATION, IT AGREED THAT THREE BORDER POSTS WOULD BE OPENED FOR THIS PURPOSE. FROM WEST TO EAST THESE WERE DORUMA, RPT DORUMA (4 DEGREES 45 MINUTES NORTH, 27 DEGREES 45 MINUTES EAST), YAKULUKU, RPT YAKULUKU (4 DEGREES 39 MINUTES NORTH, 29 DEGREES EAST), AND ABA (3 DEGREES 55 MINUTES NORTH, 30 DEGREES 15 MINUTES EAST). THE FIRST TWO POINTS ARE JUST NORTH OF THE TWO MAJOR RESETTLEMENT CAMPS AT AMADI AND NUGADI. HOWEVER THE GOZ HAS REFUSED TO OPEN THESE TWO POSTS USING ARGUMENT THAT THERE ARE " HARD CORE SIMBAS" ON THE OTHER SIDE WHO WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SITUATION TO RETURN AND CAUSE SECURITY PROBLEMS. (ACCORDING ARNOLD, ALMOST ALL REMAINING ZAIRIAN REFUGEES IN SUDAN ARE REGROUPED AT RAJAF, MUCH FURTHER INLAND. IN ANYCASE, AN " SIMBAS" WHO WANTED TO RETURN COULD CROSS LONG, UNPOLICABLE BORDER AT ANYTIME.)

2. THE COST TO REPATRIATION PROGRAM OF THESE CLOSED CROSSING POINTS WILL BE HIGH, ARNOLD ARGUES, BOTH IN MONEY AND TIME. REPATRIATION OF REFUGEES NOW SETTLED IN THE TWO UNHCR CAMPS VIA ABA CROSSING POINT WILL INVOLVE JOURNEY SEVERAL TIMES LONGER THAN OTHERWISE NECESSARY. OTHER REFUGEES WHO MIGHT CROSS NEARBY BORDER ON FOOT WILL NEED TRANSPORTATION TO GO THE LONG WAY AROUND. PROGRAM, WHICH SCHEDULED TO BE COMPLETED IN JUNE, WILL TAKE AT LEAST UNTIL LATE AUTUMN, AND MORE SERIOUS, MUCH LARGER PROPORTION OF THE REFUGEES WILL ARRIVE IN SUDAN TOO LATE TO PLANT CROPS DURING THIS YEAR' S RAINY SEASON, NOW BEGINNING.

3. GOZ NEVER SIGNED PROTOCOL SPECIFYING BORDER POINTS AND SO NOT LEGALLY BOUND HONOR IT. HOWEVER UNHCR AND SUDANESE NOT MADE AWARE OF GOZ OBJECTIONS UNTIL LONG AFTER BASIC AGREEMENT ITSELF WAS SIGNED. REFUSAL OPEN CROSSING POINTS IS IN UNHCR VIEW A VIOLATION OF SPIRIT OF ACCORD. HIGH COMMISSIONER HAS APPROACHED ZAIRIAN FONMIN ON SUBJECT WITHOUT POSITIVE RESULTS. ALTHOUGH ANY MOVES SHOULD BE DISCUSSED IN ADVANCE WITH UNHCR OUR INTEREST IN RAPID AND EFFICIENT REPATRIATION ARGUES FOR AN APPROACH TO
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GOZ ON OUR PART. ONE POSSIBLE LINE MIGHT BE FIND WAY OF

ASKING ZAIRIANS TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT SECURITY ARGUMENT
AGAINST OPENING THESE POINTS. AS DESCRIBED BY ARNOLD, IT DOES
INDEED SEEM FLIMSY.

4. ANOTHER POSSIBLE SOLUTION BEING CONSIDERED INTERNALLY BY UNHCR
AND MENTIONED IN VERY INFORMAL WAY BY ARNOLD, IS AIRLIFT OF
REFUGEES FROM ISIRO (2 DEGREES 50 MINUTES NORTH, 27 DEGREES 45
MINUTES EAST) TO YAMBIO, IN SUDAN (4 DEGREES 30 MINUTES NORTH,
28 DEGREES 20 MINUTES EAST), ABOUT 200 KILOMETERS NORTH. ARNOLD
SAID HE UNDERSTOOD FRG HAD BEEN APPROACHED INFORMALLY AND HAD
TENTATIVELY INDICATED IT MIGHT HAVE TWO DC-3 S WHICH COULD BE
USED FOR THIS PURPOSE. IT SEEMS VERY LIKELY THAT WHETHER OR NOT
THIS OFFER MATERIALIZES, UNHCR WILL APPROACH US TOO.

5. ALTHOUGH WE CAN ONLY GUESS AT LOGISTICAL AND BUREAUCRATIC
COMPLESITIES OF SUCH AN OPERATION, BELIEVE IT DESERVES SOME
THOUGHT. ZAMISH C-123 IS ALREADY IN ZAIRE. DISTANCE FROM
YAMBIO TO ISIRO IS NOT GREAT. PROGRAM, POSSIBLY IN CONJUNCTION
WITH OTHERS, MIGHT WELL HAVE POSITIVE BENEFITS FROM USAF POINT
OF VIEW - WOULD BE CONSISTANT WITH OTHER PROGRAMS SHOWING HUMAN-
ITARIAN ASPECTS OF US MILITARY OVRSEAS. FROM OVER- ALL USG POINT
OF VIEW, IT WOULD HELP EXPEDITE PROGRAM TO WHICH USG HAS MADE
SIZABLE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION ALREADY AND WOULD HELP A LOT OF
SUDANESE REFUGEES. FINALLY IT WOULD BE CONTRIBUTION TO POSITIVE
USG IMAGE IN ZAIRE AND ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA. CRUMP

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SREF
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 APR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973KISANG00061
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: KISANGANI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730431/aaaahluc.tel
Line Count: 144
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ORM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26-Jul-2001 by kellerpr>; APPROVED <29-Aug-2001 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971119
Subject: REPATRIATION OF SUDANESE REFUGEES
TAGS: SREF, SU, n/a
To: BONN
GENEVA
KHARTOUM
KINSHASA
ORM
SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005